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0538 :RGENT--ALERT*****:

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WASHINGTON, OCT. 25, REUTER--A NUMBER OF AMERICAN MILITARY BASES REPORTEDLY WERE PLACED ON THE ALERT EARLY TODAY, BUT DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REFUSED ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORT.

AT OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA, HEADQUARTERS OF THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND, WHICH INCLUDES AMERICANS NUCLEAR STRIKING FORCE, AIRMEN STARTED REPORTING BACK TO THE BASE ABOUT 2 A.M. EDT (0600 GMT). A NEWSMAN THERE REPORTED THE ALERT SEEMED TO BE THE MOST SERIOUS SINCE THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS.

SAC BASES IN NORTH DAKOTA, WHERE MANY OF THE MINUTEMEN MISSILES ARE LOCATED, AND IN PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK, ALSO WERE AMONG THOSE REPORTEDLY ALERTED.

::REUTER JCKX/JK